

Claim 1 (Currently amended) A method of matching a buyer of goods with a seller of goods comprising the following the steps:

- a) collecting information from the seller relating to the goods;
- b) classifying the goods according to a pre-selected set of criteria selected by the seller, the pre-selected set of criteria including data relating to buyers that are to be denied access to the goods, the data relating to buyers including at least one characteristic selected from the following categories of characteristics:
 - trade classification;
 - type of retailer; and
 - type of industry;
- c) listing the goods in a secured manner;
- d) collecting information relevant to said pre-selected set of criteria from the buyer;
- e) verifying the information collected from the buyer;
- f) selecting an approved buyer based on verified information;
- g) authorizing the approved buyer to request a query of the listed goods for those goods that the buyer seeks to buy;
- h) determining which goods are available for the approved buyer to buy based on a linkage between the approved buyer, the query and the pre-selected set of criteria, wherein at least one of steps a through h is performed using a computer.

Claim 2 (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein there is a plurality of sellers and buyers.

Claim 3 (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the approved buyer an purchase from the seller goods which are determined to be available.

Claim 4 (Original) A method according to claim 1 further including the following additional steps:

collecting information related to seller's identification;

verifying the information collected from the seller;
selecting an approved seller based on verified information; and
authorizing the approved seller to provide information relating to goods of the seller.

Claim 5 (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the verifying step comprises a means for manually confirming the buyer information by way of publicly available data.

Claim 6 (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the verifying step comprises a means for manually confirming the buyer information by way of privately held data.

Claim 7 (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the identity of the seller is not disclosed to the buyer.

Claims 8 and 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Previously presented) A system for matching a buyer of goods with a seller of goods comprising:

- means for collecting information from the seller relating to the goods;
- means for classifying the goods according to a pre-selected set of criteria selected by the seller, the pre-selected set of criteria including data relating to buyers that are to be denied access to the goods, the data relating to buyers including at least one characteristic selected from the following categories of characteristics:
 - trade classification;
 - type of retailer; and
 - type of industry,
- a database containing a listing of the goods in a secured manner;
- means for collecting information relevant to said pre-selected set of criteria from the buyer;
- means to verify said buyer information;
- means to select an approved buyer based on the verified buyer information;
- an input means for permitting the approved buyer to query the database for goods that the approved buyer seeks to buy;

- a data processor for determining which items of goods are available for the approved buyer to buy based on a linkage between the approved buyer, the query and the pre-selected set of criteria.

Claim 11 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 including a plurality of sellers and buyers.

Claim 12 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 further including:

- means for collecting information related to seller's identification;
- means for verifying the information collected from the seller;
- means for selecting an approved seller based on verified information; and
- means for authorizing the approved seller to provide information relating to goods of the seller.

Claim 13 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 wherein the sellers and approved buyers access the system by way of a public communications network.

Claim 14 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 wherein the sellers and approved buyers access the system by way of a private communications network.

Claim 15 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 wherein the verification means comprises a processing means for automatically confirming the buyer information by way of publicly available data.

Claim 16 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 wherein the verification means comprises a means for manually confirming the buyer information by way of publicly available data.

Claim 17 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 wherein the verification means comprises a processing means for automatically confirming the buyer information by way of privately available data.

Claim 18 (Previously presented) A system according to claim 10 wherein the verification means comprises a means for manually confirming the buyer information by way of privately available data.

Claims 19 and 20 (Canceled)

Claim 21 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the category of trade classification includes at least one characteristic selected from the group: retailer; distributor; jobber; manufacturer; importer; exporter; and wholesaler.

Claim 22 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the category of type of retailer includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: mass-market discounter; drug chain; supermarket; specialty; gift; warehouse club; deep-discounter; and general merchandiser.

Claim 23 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the category of type of industry includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: apparel and jewellery; children and hobby; domestic chemicals; electronics; food and drinks; general merchandise; health and beauty care; household; publishing seasonal; sports and fitness; and stationary and office.

Claim 24 (Previously presented) The method of claim 10 wherein the category of trade classification includes at least one characteristic selected from the group: retailer; distributor; jobber; manufacturer; importer; exporter; and wholesaler.

Claim 25 (Previously presented) The method of claim 10 wherein the category of type of retailer includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: mass-market discounter; drug chain; supermarket; specialty; gift; warehouse club; deep-discounter; and general merchandiser.

Claim 26 (Previously presented) The method of claim 10 wherein the category of type of industry includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: apparel and jewellery; children and hobby; domestic chemicals; electronics; food and drinks; general merchandise; health and beauty care; household; publishing seasonal; sports and fitness; and

stationary and office.

Claim 27 (Currently amended) A method of identifying, to an approved buyer, goods offered for sale by a seller, the method comprising:

- (a) allowing the seller to define criteria relating to buyers that are to be denied access to the goods, the criteria including at least one characteristic selected from one or more of the following categories of characteristics:
 - i. trade classification;
 - ii. type of retailer; or
 - iii. type of industry,
- (b) collecting information relevant to said criteria from an unapproved buyer;
- (c) verifying the information collected from the unapproved buyer;
- (d) based on the result of (c), designating the unapproved buyer as an approved buyer;
- (e) allowing the approved buyer to define a query;
- (f) comparing the query with the goods to determine whether the goods match the query;
- (g) if the result of (f) is that the goods match the query, then comparing the information collected in (b) with the criteria to determine if the buyer matches any characteristic defined by the seller in (a);
- (h) if the result of (g) is that the buyer does not match the criteria defined by the seller in (a), then identifying the goods to the buyer, wherein at least one of the steps a through h is performed using a computer.

Claim 28 (Previously presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the category of trade classification includes at least one characteristic selected from the group: retailer; distributor; jobber; manufacturer; importer; exporter; and wholesaler.

Claim 29 (Previously presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the category of type of retailer includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: mass-market

discounter; drug chain; supermarket; specialty; gift; warehouse club; deep-discounter; and general merchandiser.

Claim 30 (Previously presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the category of type of industry includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: apparel and jewellery; children and hobby; domestic chemicals; electronics; food and drinks; general merchandise; health and beauty care; household; publishing seasonal; sports and fitness; and stationary and office.

Claim 31 (Previously presented) The method of claim 28 wherein the criteria further include the identity of one or more entities that are to be denied access to the goods.

Claim 32 (Previously presented) The method of claim 31 wherein in (g), the approved buyer is determined to match the criteria if the approved buyer matches any characteristic or is any of the entities.

Claim 33 (Previously presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the criteria further include one or more geographic regions.

Claim 34 (Previously presented) The method of claim 33 wherein in (g), the approved buyer is determined to match the criteria if the approved buyer matches any characteristic or is located in any of the geographic regions.

Claim 35 (Previously presented) The method of claim 31 wherein the criteria further include one or more geographic regions.

Claim 36 (Previously presented) The method of claim 35 wherein in (g), the approved buyer is determined to match the criteria if the approved buyer (1) matches any characteristic, (2) is any of the entities or (3) is located in any of the geographic regions.

Claim 37 (Previously presented) The method of claim 27 wherein there is a plurality of sellers and wherein each of said sellers has completed (a) in respect of the seller's goods, and wherein each seller's goods and associated criteria are recorded in a database, and wherein, during (f), the query is compared with all goods in the database, and wherein during (g), the criteria associated

with each seller's goods that match the query are compared with the buyers information to determine whether that seller's goods are identified to the buyer in (h).

Claim 38 (Previously presented) A method of identifying, to an approved buyer, goods offered for sale by a seller, the method comprising:

- (a) allowing the seller to define criteria relating to buyers that are to be denied access to the goods, the criteria defining at least one combination of a specific entity and a geographic region;
- (b) collecting information relevant to said criteria from an unapproved buyer;
- (c) verifying the information collected from the unapproved buyer;
- (d) based on the result of (c), designating the unapproved buyer as an approved buyer;
- (e) allowing the approved buyer to request a define a query identifying types of goods;
- (f) comparing the query with the goods to determine whether the goods match the query;
- (g) if the result of (f) is that the goods match the query, then comparing the information collected in (b) to determine if the approved buyer is the specified entity and is located in the geographic region;
- (h) if the result of (g) is that the approved buyer is not the specified entity or is not located in the geographic region, then identifying the goods to the buyer.

Claim 39 (Previously presented) The method of claim 38 wherein there is a plurality of sellers and wherein each of said sellers has completed (a) in respect of the seller's goods, and wherein each seller's goods and associated criteria are recorded in a database, and wherein, during (f), the query is compared with all goods in the database, and wherein during (g), the criteria associated with each seller's goods that match the query are compared with the buyers information to determine whether that seller's goods are identified to the buyer in (h).

Claim 40 (Previously presented) A method of identifying, to an approved buyer, goods offered for sale by a seller, the method comprising:

- (a) allowing the seller to define criteria relating to buyers that are to be denied access to the goods, the criteria defining at least one combination of a specific entity and

at least one characteristic selected from one or more of the following categories of characteristics:

- (i) trade classification;
 - (ii) type of retailer; and
 - (iii) type of industry,
- (b) collecting information relevant to said criteria from an unapproved buyer;
 - (c) verifying the information collected from the unapproved buyer;
 - (d) based on the result of (c), designating the unapproved buyer as an approved buyer;
 - (e) allowing the approved buyer to define a query;
 - (f) comparing the query with the goods to determine whether the goods match the query;
 - (g) if the result of (f) is that the goods match the query, then comparing the information collected in (b) to determine if the approved buyer is the specified entity and matches the at least one characteristic;
 - (h) if the result of (g) is that the approved buyer is not the specified entity or does not match the at least one characteristic, then identifying the goods to the buyer.

Claim 41 (Previously presented) The method of claim 40 wherein the category of trade classification includes at least one characteristic selected from the group: retailer; distributor; jobber; manufacturer; importer; exporter; and wholesaler.

Claim 42 (Previously presented) The method of claim 40 wherein the category of type of retailer includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: mass-market discounter; drug chain; supermarket; specialty; gift; warehouse club; deep-discounter; and general merchandiser.

Claim 43 (Previously presented) The method of claim 40 wherein the category of type of industry includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: apparel and

jewellery; children and hobby; domestic chemicals; electronics; food and drinks; general merchandise; health and beauty care; household; publishing seasonal; sports and fitness; and stationary and office.

Claim 44 (Previously presented) A method of identifying, to an approved buyer, goods offered for sale by a seller, the method comprising:

- (a) allowing the seller to define criteria relating to buyers that are to be denied access to the goods, the criteria defining at least one combination of (1) a specific entity, (2) a geographic area and (3) at least one characteristic selected from one or more of the following categories of characteristics:
 - i. trade classification;
 - ii. type of retailer; and
 - iii. type of industry,
- (b) collecting information relevant to said criteria from an unapproved buyer;
- (c) verifying the information collected from the unapproved buyer;
- (d) based on the result of (c), designating the unapproved buyer as an approved buyer;
- (e) allowing the approved buyer to define a query;
- (f) comparing the query with the goods to determine whether the goods match the query;
- (g) if the result of (f) is that the goods match the query, then comparing the information collected in (b) to determine if the approved buyer is the specified entity, is located in the geographic region and matches the at least one characteristic;
- (h) if the result of (g) is that the approved buyer (1) is not the specified entity, (2) is not located in the geographic region or (3) does not match the at least one characteristic, then identifying the goods to the buyer.

Claim 45 (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the category of trade classification includes at least one characteristic selected from the group: retailer; distributor; jobber; manufacturer; importer; exporter; and wholesaler.

Claim 46 (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the category of type of

retailer includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: mass-market discounter; drug chain; supermarket; specialty; gift; warehouse club; deep-discounter; and general merchandiser.

Claim 47 (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the category of type of industry includes at least one characteristic selected from the following group: apparel and jewellery; children and hobby; domestic chemicals; electronics; food and drinks; general merchandise; health and beauty care; household; publishing seasonal; sports and fitness; and stationary and office.